3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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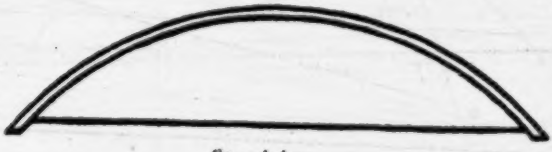
Weapons

411 After living centuries of semi-hunting wild life, the Santal has naturally many weapons in his armoury to indulge in the delights of [223] the chase in the jungles. They use a bow, about three cubits in length for shooting fowls. It is a mechanism made of bamboos, a split bamboo being used for the string as well. The



Santal bow

arrow for this fowling piece is made of a reed (Santali, *dulchar*) on to which the stump, again of bamboo, is stuck, serving as the head of the shaft, to strike the birds dead. On the top is fitted a feather of fowls in an angular slant to regulate

Iron arrow for shooting animals

Bamboo arrow for shooting birds

movement. (See illustrations). When hunting animals, however, they use arrows with heads of

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triangular iron. Big games are hunted with the aid 411 •
of the battle-axe, commonly known as "tangi"

Tangi

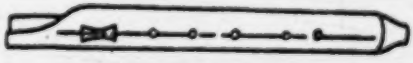
(Santali, *kapi*) and a spear, called "borolam," a trident like weapon fitted into a solid bamboo,

Borolam

about five feet in height. (See illustrations.)

Musical Instruments

Fond of music as they are, the Santals have 534
several kinds of musical instruments. It is a fre-



Bamboo flute

quent sight to see them passing by you playing on a bamboo flute, a strange enervating melody. (See

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offers pujas to the presiding deity of the hill. Vermilion and red fowls are offered to the gods together with sun-dried rice and incense. As the fowls are sacrificed, the blood is poured on the sun-dried rice and offered to the other gods of the locality in their names. The head of the fowl lies on the ground and the body is kept for the meal of the *Dibri*. Next the *Dibri* salutes the deity by prostrating himself fully on the ground and thus invokes him:—

224 782 224 782 793

We are hunting in this jungle.
Let the hunting be safe.
Let us hunt in plenty.
Let not lions and tigers kill us.
Let no serpent bite us.

224

Now the news is conveyed by blowing a horn called *Sakwa* made of the horn of a *Gayal* (a species of ox, *Bos frontalis*). All men begin beating the jungle. The hunting goes on as musical instruments like the *Nagera*, *dhak*, *dhor* (small drum), *jharli* (a bell), cymbal are played upon by a band of musicians. The *Nagera* sounds "dubuñ, dubuñ, dubuñ" but when the animals approach with a swift motion, it is changed to "dhibi, dhibi, dhibi." All men become aware of the advancing games. Starting approximately at 10 A.M., the hunt continues upto sunset, with bows and arrows, *tangis*, swords, *kapi* and *borolam* as weapons.

[534] [202] [237] [534] [411]

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[End Plate I]

A Santal Couple

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Photo: Mayurbhanj State

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SANTAL PARGANAS

224
[796]

[793] of the forest where the hunt is to be held, to ensure
[782] success and safety. After performance of the ceremony
[411] the whole party enters the forest with bows and
[534] arrows, Pellet bows (Gorkhas), Slings (Gaduar), Tangha (Kopi), battle axes, dogs and Tamuka (drums) and Sakuas (Blowpipe made of buffalo horn) which they beat and blow furiously all through the hunt.

In the forest they stand side by side in a long line surrounding an area. Some remain ready with their weapons behind the big trees, the drums and blowpipes of horn they beat and blow furiously. The men nearest to the game shoot their arrows at them; when the animals being frightened run hither and thither, men shoot arrows, sling stones and tanghas at them. If the game elude the arrows and other weapons shot or hurled at them, the baffled hunts-men shout out and let their dogs run after them. The men, who stand in line, then entangle the game and the hunters who followed the game come up and kill them. Once when I was at Bokrabandh and
[114] Katahaldih I saw the Santal process of catching hares and ichneuman The Santals barricade a meadow, which is just by the side of a forest, with branches of trees and bamboos, only keeping open the side which is towards the forest. They keep an opening on one side where they fix a trap. They drive the hares from the jungle towards the place which is surrounded by the branches. The hares run towards the trap and fall into it. They kill ichneuman in the following way. The inchneuman remains under the ground and some dig holes, while others remain ready with Tanghis. As soon as it comes out they strike or throw Tanghis

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at it. They kill any animal which they see before them during the time of hunting. After the hunt the slain animals are dressed and the meat is divided among themselves in the following way. The man, who first hits an animal, has a right over it. He has to distribute a certain part to others who participate. The rest has to be distributed among the men of his own village, keeping a certain part for himself. This hunting lasts not more than two days. They kill birds with pellet bows or with bolts. Besides this Dehri hunting there are other hunting expeditions in which the people of one village go to hunt whenever they like. In Sakrat people of each village go for hunt, on the last day of the month of Poush (January) generally after their Badna festival

HUNTING IMPLEMENTS:—

1. **Arrow** :—Santal arrow consists of two parts—the hand and the shaft. The head is made of iron and is pyramidal in shape. It is broader at the base and gradually tapers towards the sharp pointed end. The basal region of the head ends in a tang which is inserted into the shaft and tied tightly by means of cocoon strips. The shaft is made of a long, cylindrical, narrow bamboo piece. At the butt end of the shaft two feathers are tied with cocoon strips. These feathers keep the balance of the arrow at the time of flight. A notch is made by cutting a little portion from one side of the posterior part of the butt end for placing it on the bow string.

Before operation, sometimes, the arrow head is poisoned to inflict a fatal wound. The Santals generally practise 'Mediterranean method' for releasing the arrow

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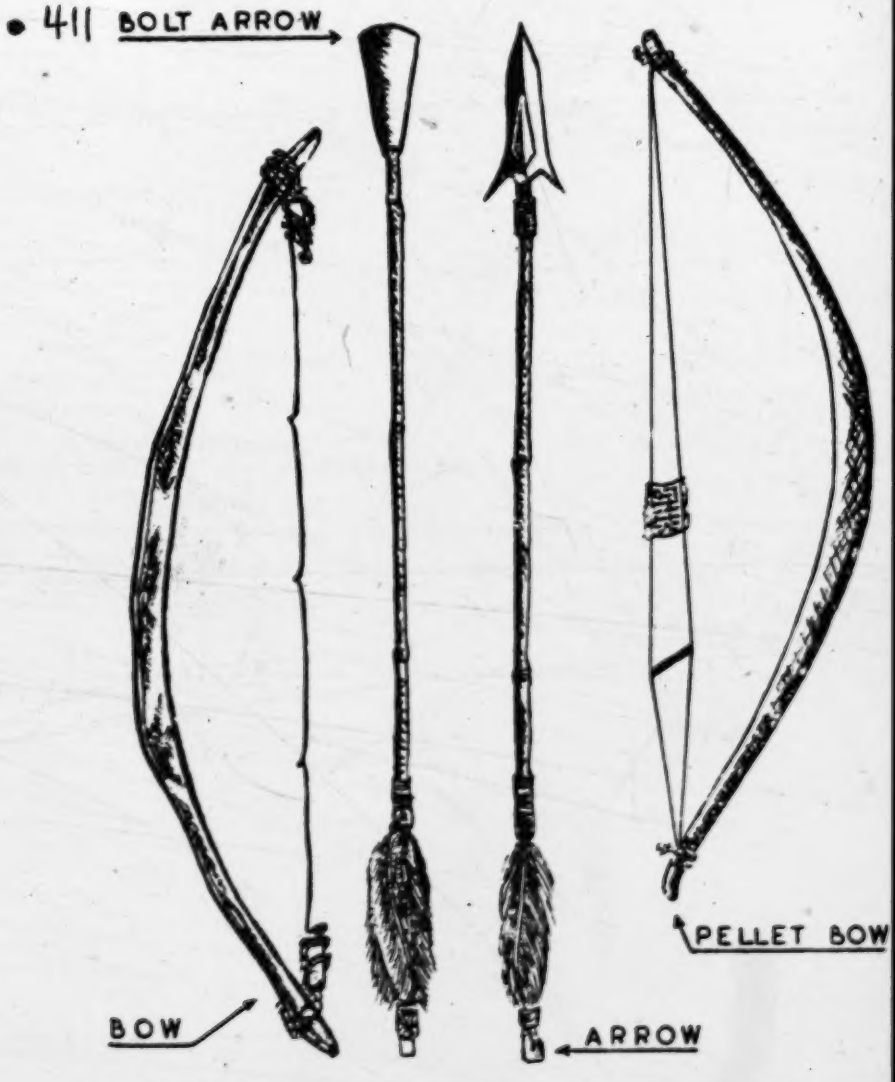
[facing P. 32]



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411 from the bow, i.e., the butt end of the arrow is held lightly between the fore and the middle fingers and the thumb is not used.

2. **Bolt Arrow** :—The bolt arrow, like an ordinary arrow, consists of two parts—the head and the shaft. The head is made of a small, solid piece of wood which is broader and flattened at the upper end and gradually becomes narrower towards the base. The cross-section of this part is roughly circular. At the base of the head a hole is made to receive the shaft which is a long, smooth and slender piece of reed. Two feathers are tied by means of cocoon strips on either side of the butt or free end of the shaft. A notch is made by cutting a little portion from one side of the posterior part of the butt end of the shaft. The other end of the shaft is inserted and fixed tightly into the hole of the head. After being released from the bow it will stupefy the birds in the air with its blow.

3. **Plain Bow** :—The Santal bow consists of a stave and a string. The stave is made of a long, curved bamboo split. The belly which is the surface facing the archer when drawing the bow is concave where as the back which is remote from the archer is convex. The middle portion of the stave is somewhat broad which serves as the "grip", but then it gradually becomes narrower towards the ends or horns. There are two stops cut from the solid ends of the stave to prevent the string from slipping. The string which is [283] fastened to the horns of the stave by means of a small loop is made of plaited bark fibre.

4. **Pellet Bow** :—The Pellet bow, like the plain bow, has a stave which is made of a long, curved bamboo split. The

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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middle portion of the belly of the stave is more or less flat, and it is tied with the stave by means of cords. There are two strings running parallel to each other and they are tied at the notches of both ends of the stave. Strings are made of braided fibre. A small piece of bamboo is tied at right angles to the stave and it is in between the two strings near the tied end. This bamboo piece is to keep the pouch stretched. Near the middle of the bow strings there are a number of small cords tied parallel to each other forming a pouch like structure. This bow is adapted specially for pellets of stone or hard clay balls and not for arrows. 411

5. **Sling** :- The sling, among the Santals, is a common appliance for discharging stone pellets or hard clay particles. Bark fibres are made into a braided rope and of this rope the sling is made. A pouch is made by means of two knots at a little distance from one another, and from the knots two ends of the rope stick out. One end is slightly longer than the other. This longer end has a small loop at its foremost part for the insertion of the finger of the operator. A stone is placed in the pouch. Inserting the finger into the loop and at the same time holding the other end of the rope it is whirled round, and when it is in motion the end which has no loop is let loose in the direction at which the pellet is aimed. The pellet after being released from the sling goes violently towards the bird and stupefies it. [283]

6. **Battle Axe** :- The implement consists of an iron blade and a wooden handle. The handle is made of a long, solid, cylindrical piece of wood. It has a pointed end where the blade is to be fixed. The

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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411 blade is a flat piece of iron and looks like the 'expanded wing of a flying bird'. The cutting edge is concave in the middle and it is sharp. The blade, away from the cutting edge, becomes thicker and narrower and forms a narrow neck ending in a socket to receive the handle. The handle is inserted through the socket of the blade in such a way that the cutting edge of the blade remains parallel to it. It is generally used for hunting purpose.

226 **Fishing :-** The Santals are not so interested in fishing as in hunting. Want of interest in catching fish is due to the scarcity of fishes in the streams. The following are a few methods by which they catch fish :-

The Santals make a weir with a platform at one end and the fish in their frantic efforts to go down stream, jump into this and are caught.

The Santals put bamboos cross-wise in a stream and keep a small opening, in front of which they fix a trap of wicker work which is made either of thin bamboo strips or of twigs. It is cylindrical in shape, and the size varies from two feet to two and a half feet. The mouth is broad and is furnished with a conical valve of very thin bamboo spikes. The other end is tightly closed. The fish passing through that small opening fall into the trap. The trap is prepared in such a way that once the fish enters it cannot come out. The Santali name for this trap is 'torodan'.

They also catch fish by fishing-net, which is of various types. The most common type is known as 'Hunda Jal', in which the net is fixed to three pieces of thick bamboo strips which form a triangular frame.